

the rhetoric that's coming out of the White House and from the President.

I was watching the news this morning, and the President indicated that they were going to have these budget talks down at the White House today. And he said, and I quote, that the Republicans, in effect, have a gun to the head of the American people. That just isn't the kind of rhetoric that should be used right now when we're talking about the huge budget deficits we have. And if I were talking to the President, I would try to admonish him to not do that in the future.

And then, when we were talking about Libya, I think it was just about 4 or 5 days ago, he said that we in Congress are making Libya a cause celebre, indicating that it's not an important issue, and we're just trying to puff it up so that we can make political points.

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The fact of the matter is it is a war. The President went to the Arab League, he went to the French, the English, he went to the United Nations, and NATO and decided that he was going to be involved in an attack on Libya and Muammar Qadhafi. But the one place he didn't come to talk about this issue was the Congress of the United States—the House of Representatives and the Senate. The first place that a President ought to go if he thinks we ought to go into a conflict of any kind is the Congress.

The Constitution is very clear on the responsibilities of the President before he goes into a conflict. It has to be a threat to the United States, a threat to our interests, and it has to be approved by the Congress of the United States. The Congress of the United States is the only body that can declare war. He can't do that. He can manage a war. He is the Commander in Chief once we go into war, but he can't start a war unless it's in our national interest or there's a threat to the United States. That was clarified by the War Powers Act during the Nixon administration because there was some question about the latitude a President might have using the Constitution.

The Constitution was explained very carefully in the 1970s in the War Powers Act. Now, that's never been tested in the courts. Some people say it's unconstitutional. But the fact of the matter is it's the law of the Nation. The President cannot violate the law or the Constitution, and in our opinion, he's violated both.

Let me just tell you what's going on in this war that the President says is not a war.

We have flown almost 30 percent of the sorties. That means we have flown 3,475 flights into the combat area. We have dropped bombs and missiles 132 times on targets, and several times we've hit civilians.

Nobody likes Muammar Qadhafi. Nobody wants him in office. But the fact of the matter is, we've been involved in a war to get rid of him.

On May 22, the figure was that of the missiles that were fired, there were 246 missiles fired, and 228 were the United States' missiles—at \$1.1 million per missile. And we're paying approximately 60 or 70 percent of the total cost of this conflict through NATO or directly from the taxpayers of the United States.

Now, the reason I came down here today is to say that we should not be in that conflict because it was not in our national interest and there was no threat to the United States and it was a violation of the Constitution and the War Powers Act.

The President said he had to do it because it was a humanitarian issue. If it was a humanitarian issue and we really needed to go in there, he should have come to Congress. The previous President, President Bush, did go to Congress on Afghanistan and Iraq to get approval before he did it, but President Obama decided to do this unilaterally. So we are in a war now, and it's costing the taxpayers close to a billion dollars in a war that we should not be in.

He said it was for humanitarian purposes. If that's the case, we ought to be in a war in the Ivory Coast. Right now in the Sudan, there are thousands and thousands of people being executed and killed. And if that's the case, we ought to be in the Sudan. In Syria, we all know what's going on in Syria right now. If that's the case, we ought to be in Syria. There are wars of opportunity every place.

I just like to end, Mr. Speaker, by saying this: The President should always come to the Congress if it's in our national interest or a threat to this country before he goes to war. It's constitutionally required.

DEBT CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. I came down to the floor today to talk about the fiscal crisis that we're having in America. There are those when I open the front page of the paper, Mr. Speaker, and I read the headline, it talks about having a debt limit vote crisis in this country. I went back, I looked, and apparently we've raised the debt limit over 70 times with a vote right here in this body. Apparently having a vote isn't particularly a complicated thing to do.

What we're having is a debt crisis. I think that's an important distinction. I was talking to a freshman colleague of mine yesterday about that. Understand that we can have the vote, Mr. Speaker. It's within the House's authority to bring a vote to raise the debt limit tomorrow. In fact, we brought that vote to the House already: Should we raise the debt ceiling or should we not? Mr. Speaker, we defeated it. We defeated it by a wide margin here in this body.

What we have is a debt crisis.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if it were just existing debt, perhaps we could work out

a way to finance that, but it's not. It's continued borrowing each and every day to the tune of 42 cents of every dollar that we spend. In other words, if we paid for Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, interest on the national debt, those other mandatory spending programs, just those, Mr. Speaker, we've already spent every nickel in Federal revenue.

That means every nickel that we spend for education, every nickel that we spend for transportation, every nickel that we spend on national defense, on homeland security, on the environment, on the courts, every other nickel we borrow, with absolutely no plan, Mr. Speaker, for changing that going forward.

If the President were here today, Mr. Speaker, I would say we do not have a debt limit vote crisis. We have a debt crisis, and there is only one body in this town that has put together a budget that will address it. I am proud to say as a freshman in this Congress, as a freshman in this House, it was the U.S. House of Representatives that took on that responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

It's been 799 days since the United States Senate last passed a budget. Hear that. Three years ago since the Senate last passed a budget. Not a balanced budget, mind you, Mr. Speaker, but a budget at all.

These are serious challenges that require serious people to offer serious solutions, and the only one that has been offered in this town, Mr. Speaker, came from this body. I encourage the President to go back and take one more look at that, because when we come down to game day, come down to the crisis—understand what we're talking about when we talk about a crisis, we passed the debt limit back in May, Mr. Speaker, as you know. We've just been shuffling the books in this town because that's what Washington does so well: raiding this fund to pay that, raiding this fund to pay this, over and over and over again. Apparently the games just run out on August 2.

Mr. Speaker, the games cannot continue. The games must stop, and they must stop here, and we must lead as we have always led in this body.

We do not have a debt limit vote crisis. We have a debt crisis that is driven by our addiction to borrowing and spending. The borrowing and spending stops here, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you for your leadership on that.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.